Plan to Minimize Impacts on Adjacent Landowners
Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project

Program Background

The Flood Corridor Program (FCP) was created by the "Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act of 2000" (Proposition 13). Current funding comes from voter approved Proposition 1E, the "Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006" (Public Resources Code Section 5096.800 et seq, Division 5, Chapter 1.699, Article 4, specifically Public Resources Code 5096.825). The Program is authorized to fund projects providing non-structural approaches to flood management, including the acquisition and restoration of wildlife habitat and agricultural land preservation. Program guidelines require the applicant, in conjunction with the Department of Water Resources (DWR); develop a plan to minimize the impacts on adjacent landowners prior to acquiring any interest in land.

Water Code Section 79041 states: "Prior to acquiring an easement or other interest in land pursuant to this article, the project shall include a plan to minimize the impacts on adjacent landowners. The plan shall include but not be limited to, an evaluation of the impact on floodwaters, the structural integrity of affected levees, diversion facilities, customary agricultural husbandry practices and timber extraction operations, and an evaluation with regard to the maintenance required for any facilities that are proposed to be constructed or altered."

The purpose of the Plan to Minimize Impacts on Adjacent Landowners (PTM) is to inform local stakeholders and the public of the potential impacts the project will have on floodwaters, levees, diversion facilities, customary agricultural practices, timber extraction operations, and maintenance of facilities that are proposed or altered as a result of the project. While the project described here is subject to and follows the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the PTM is a specific requirement of the Flood Corridor Program per California Water Code Section 79041, and is separate from CEQA. This PTM was issued in draft form to adjacent landowners and posted to the Flood Corridor Program website from April 23 to May 27, 2014 as an opportunity for public comment. No public comments were received during this period.

Project Overview

DWR's Flood Corridor Program has awarded the Pit Resource Conservation District (Pit RCD) $1,039,000 to implement the Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area (ACWA) Restoration Project located within the 100-year floodplain of the Lower Ash Creek area. Other contributing partners include the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and the California State Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB).

The Pit RCD, Design Contractor, Watershed Coordinator, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff will oversee the construction of the project which is part of a floodplain-wide restoration effort to restore the physical connection of Ash Creek to its historic floodplain. This project will advance the goals identified within the CDFW Management Plan for the ACWA, including but not limited to improving waterfowl habitat, improving stream conditions, and reducing flood damage by encouraging natural flooding of the site through restoration actions.

The CDFW and Pit RCD have been working together since the State purchased the site and are committed to improving multiple resources such as wildlife habitat and agriculture opportunities that meet wildlife management objectives.

Evaluation of Impact from Restoration Activities on Floodwaters

The project area is located within the 100-year floodplain and is encompassed by lands managed by the CDFW. Because CDFW owns and manages the entire project area, and the project will reduce flood risk, no adjoining properties are at risk for future flood events from activities associated with the project. The goal of this project is to provide nonstructural flood control by reconnecting the stream to the approximately 3,000 foot wide floodplain. Project implementation is expected to result in the flooding of 3,500 acres of protected area, thereby providing flood relief to adjoining lands. Overall risk will still be provided by the Bieber-Lookout Highway, and project activities will relieve flood pressure on the highway by attenuating flood flows. Hydrologic analysis for the overall project (i.e. levee removal, lowering of Elkins Lane, and filling of gullies) demonstrated decreases in flow velocity and a reduction in flows which diminish with larger flood events.

Evaluation of Impacts on Structural Integrity of Affected Levees

The removal of berms and levees on the ACWA will not cause impacts to adjacent properties nor will the project negatively impact levees/roads downstream of the site.

Evaluation of Impacts on Diversion Facilities

Attenuation of flood flows has been modeled to reach a maximum of 24% reduction during two-year flood events. This reduction is likely to still be important to minimizing flood flows into the Pit River, although there is significant complexity further downstream of the project area due to the numerous channels of Ash Creek and the Pit River.

Evaluation of Impacts on Customary Agricultural Husbandry Practices

It is the intention of CDFW to maintain and improve agricultural practices that have traditionally occurred within the ACWA. A period of rest (i.e. one or two years) from livestock grazing is proposed immediately after construction in order to allow vegetation to fully recover in disturbed areas.

Evaluation of Impacts on Timber Extraction Operations

At this time, there are no timber extraction operations within the project area, and it is unlikely that there would be any at any time in the future, given the nature of the landscape.

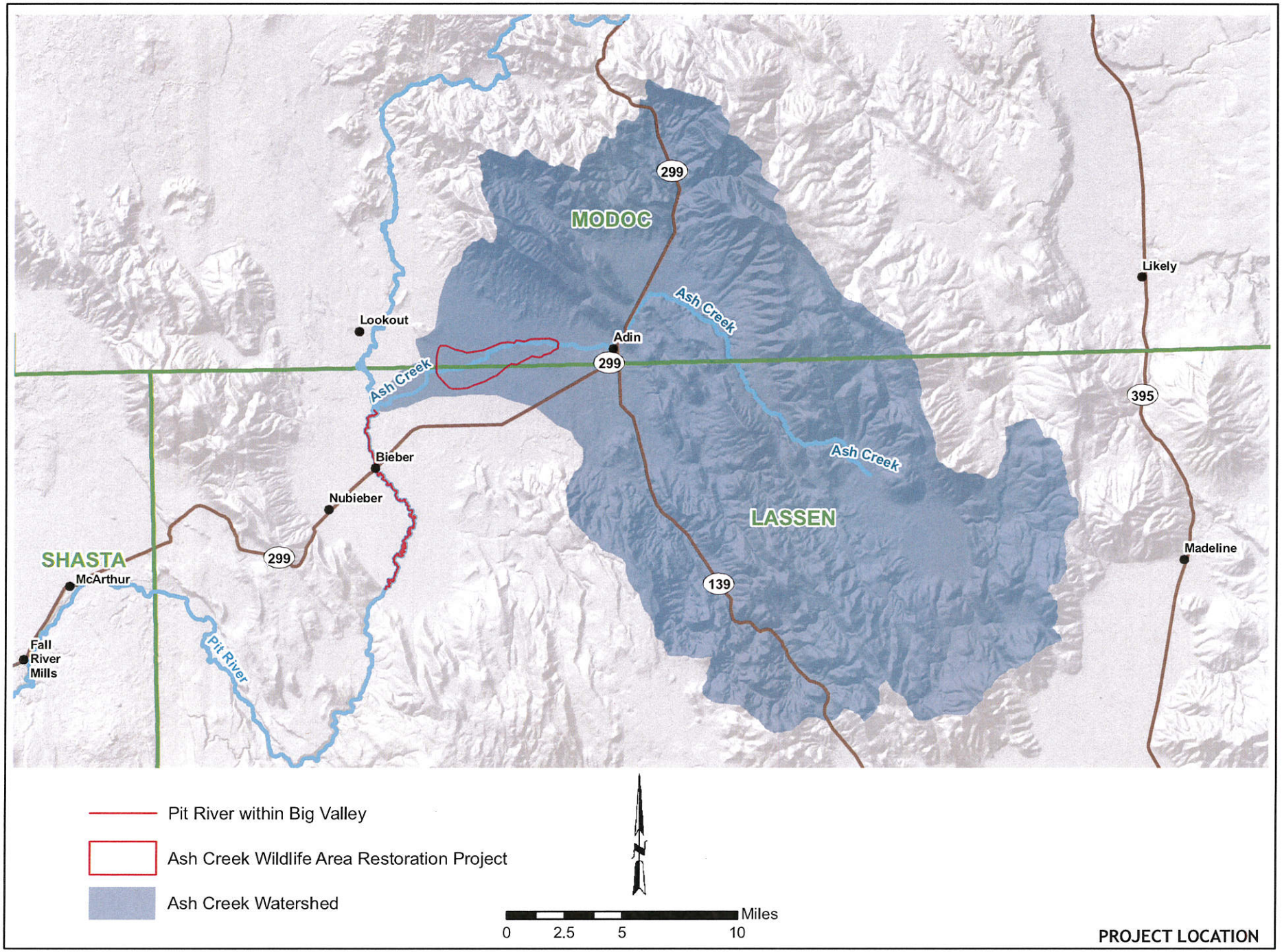
Evaluation of Impacts on Maintenance of Any Facilities Proposed to be Altered or Constructed

There are no facilities or proposed facilities within the project area.

Conclusion

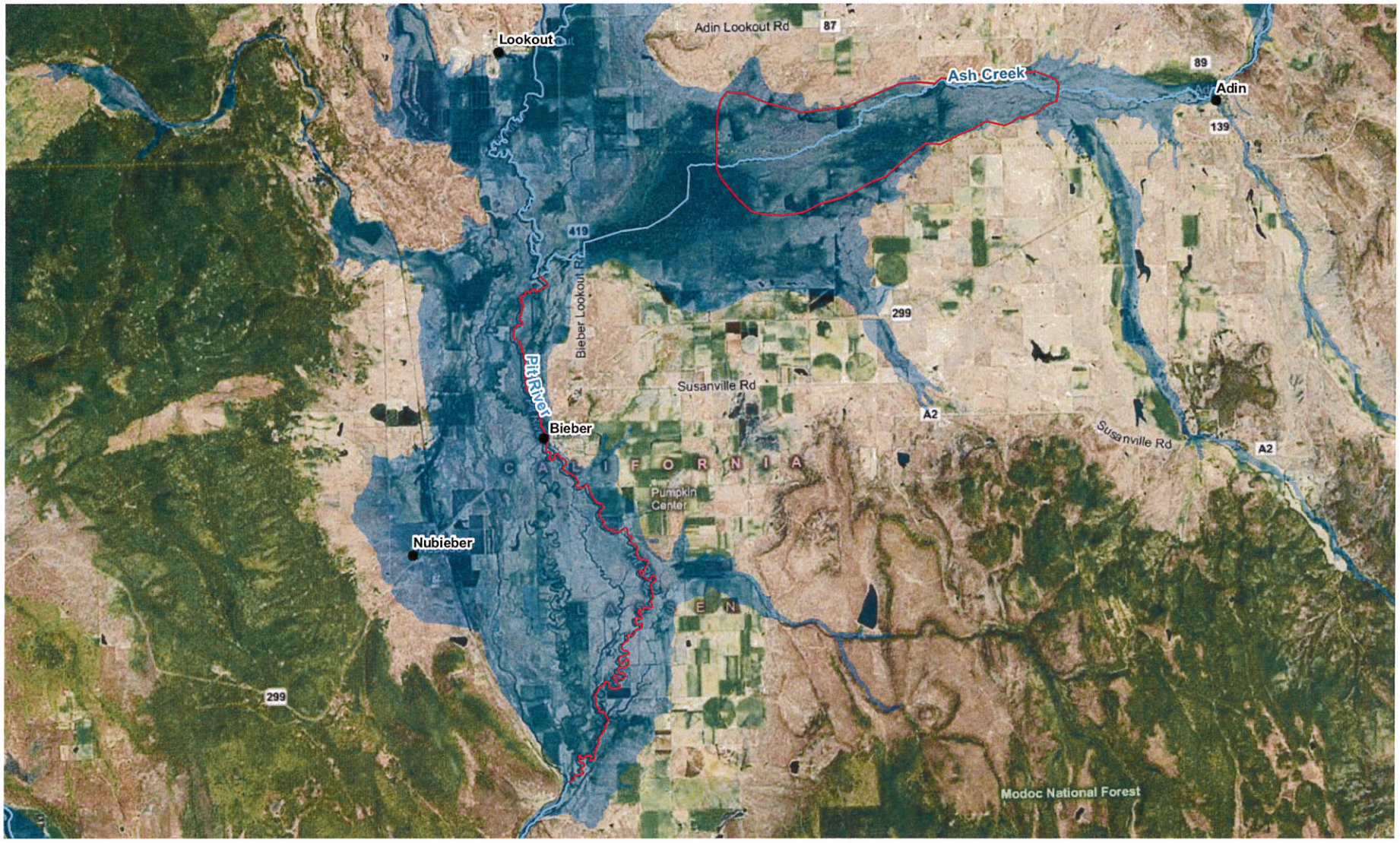
In summary, the project and its subsequent maintenance will not have significant adverse impacts on existing adjoining property owners, land use practices, or flood control facilities. In addition to conserving wildlife habitat and agricultural land, the proposed project further reduces the risk of floods to downstream areas by attenuating flood flows on-site.

Attachments:
Attachment 1 – Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project – Map of Proposed Activities



PROJECT LOCATION

LAND USE OF THE PROJECT AREA



Pit River within Big Valley

100-Year Floodplain

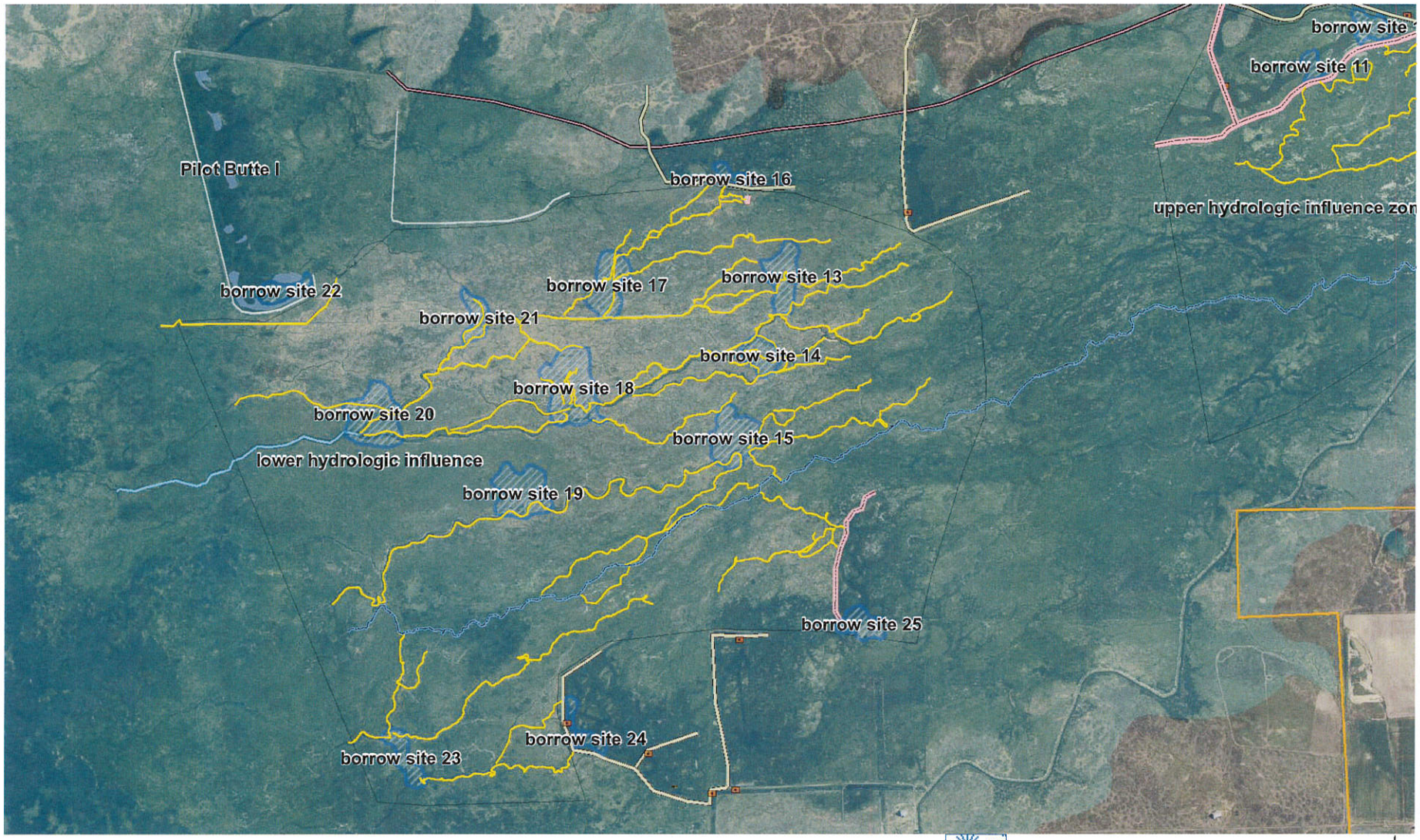
Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project

N

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

Source: 100-year composite floodplain data prepared by FEMA and the "Preliminary 100- and 200-Year Floodplains Based Upon Best Available Data" Maps prepared by DWR August 2008

100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN



altern. design
design channel
grade / remove
gully-fill
levee
main road
new berm
new irrig. pipe
grade to floodplain elev.
wetland influence zone
existing berm
gully-fill
remove berm
Outflow
Ash Creek Wildlife Area
hydrologic infl zone
wetland
exstng open water
Open Water Borrow Site
exstng open water
100-Year Floodplain

VESTRA

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

SOURCE: NAIP 2005; STREAMWISE 2009

PROJECT DETAILS
ASH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

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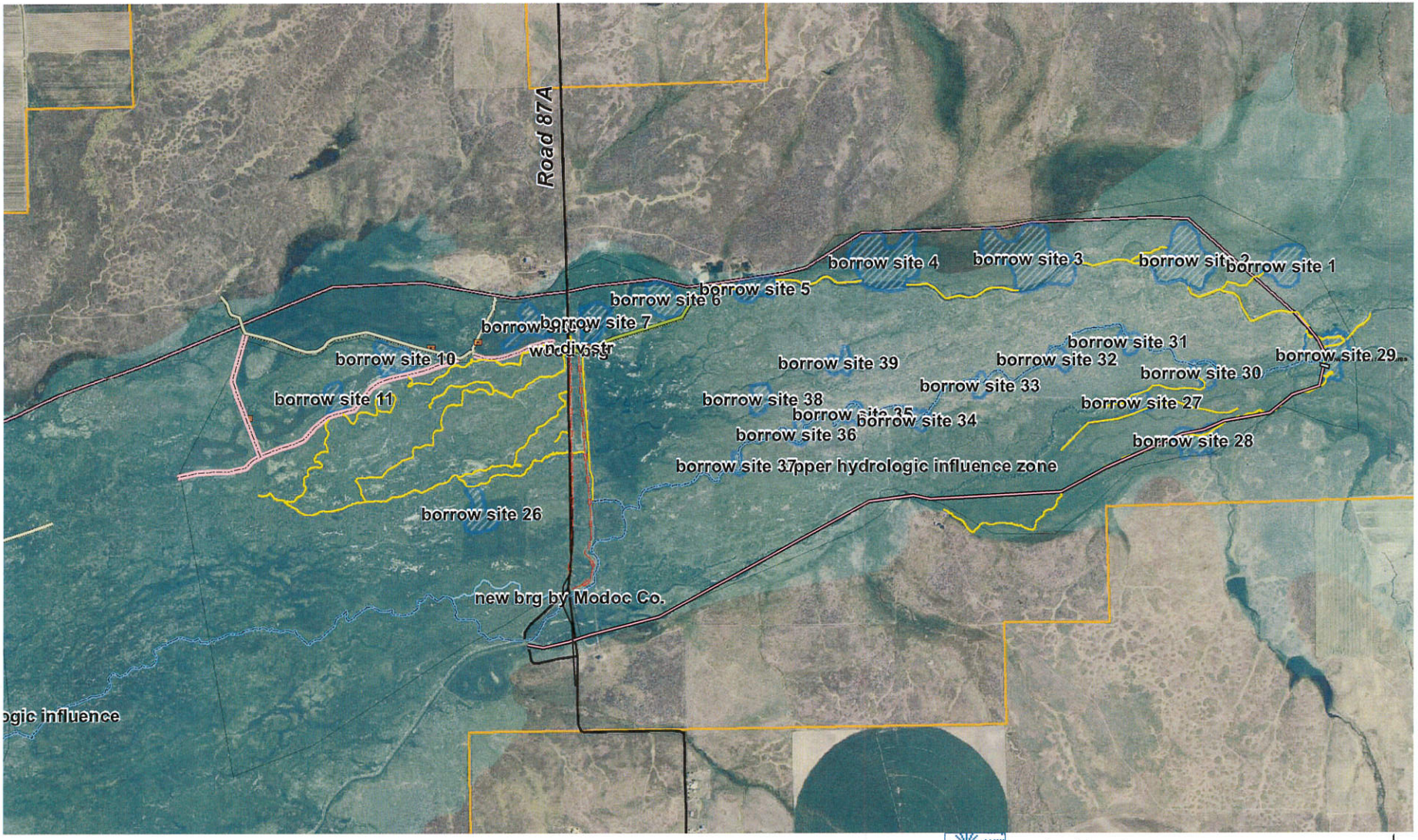

SOURCE: NAIP 2005; STREAMWISE 2009

PROJECT DETAILS
ASH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

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